

REMARKS

This Amendment is responsive to the official action dated June 5, 2007. Claims 1-7 were pending in the application. In the official action, claims 1, 2, and 5-7 were rejected, and claims 3 and 4 were objected to. In this Amendment, claims 1, 4, 5, and 6 have been amended, claims 3 and 7 have been canceled, and new claim 8 has been added. Claims 1, 2, 4-6, and 8 thus remain for consideration.

Applicants submit that claims 1, 2, 4-6, and 8 are in condition for allowance and request withdrawal of the rejections in light of the following remarks.

\$101 Rejections

Claims 6 and 7 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §101 as being directed to non-statutory subject matter.

Claim 6 has been amended. Applicants submit that the amendments to claim 6 render claim 6 compliant with §101.

Claim 7 has been canceled, thereby rendering its rejection moot.

Accordingly, Applicant requests that the rejections under §101 be withdrawn.

\$102 Rejections/\$103 Rejections/Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 1, 2, and 5 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(a) as being anticipated by Iwamoto et al. (US 5,857,058).

Claims 6 and 7 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Iwamoto in view of Tauchi et al. (US 2001/0055473).

Regarding claims 3 and 4, the Examiner indicated that the claims would be allowable if rewritten to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Claim 1 has been rewritten to include the limitation of claim 3. Accordingly, Applicant submits that claim 1 is in condition for allowance.

Claim 2 depends on claim 1. Since dependent claims inherit the limitations of their respective base claims, Applicants submit that claim 2 is patentable by virtue of its dependence on claim 1.

Claim 3 has been canceled, thereby rendering the objection to claim 3 moot.

Claim 4 depends on claim 1. Since dependent claims inherit the limitations of their respective base claims, Applicants submit that claim 4 is patentable by virtue of its dependence on claim 1.

Claims 5 and 6 have been amended to include the limitation of claim 3. Accordingly, Applicant submits that claims 5 and 6 are patentable for at least the same reasons as claim 1.

Claim 7 has been canceled, thereby rendering its rejection moot.

Applicants respectfully submit that all of the claims now pending in the application are in condition for allowance, which action is earnestly solicited. If any issues remain, or if the Examiner has any further suggestions, he/she is invited to telephone the undersigned at (908) 654-5000.

The Examiner, is hereby authorized to charge any insufficient fees or credit any overpayment associated with the above-identified application to Deposit Account No. 12-1095.


Application No.: 10/688,434

Docket No.: SONYJP 3.0-1022

The Examiner's consideration of this matter is gratefully acknowledged.

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Respectfully submitted,

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